

## THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN THE FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

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### ABSTRACT

*The aims of this article, as a part of a process of doctoral research, are concrete. It is to provide an intercultural option of literature from the main critical-interpretative perspectives that a reader who has just begun serious studies of language in literature can be used to share two cultural visions of each language. It comes to see literature as a subfield of sociology and a cultural component of language that plays an important role in building intercultural awareness in a student that acquires EFL. Because literature reflects the cultural characteristics of a given community and even more if it belongs to reality or it is an imaginary community as Macando is.*

*We believe that through a program of comparative literature as the Regional Caribbean literature and the North American literature; the students through this methodology will achieve to develop a better intercultural critical acumen of literary works, it will be trained for a better appreciation of the richness of two cultures and They will experience a sense of joy each time to be made do what, as characterizes a truly educated person, read literature especially in two cultures*

**KEYWORDS:** *Comparative Literature, Cultural Awareness, Aesthetic Sense, Pluri-Interpretive Analysis & Reading Experience*

**Received:** Jan 07, 2017; **Accepted:** Feb 22, 2017; **Published:** Jun 28, 2017; Paper Id.: IJELAUG20171

### INTRODUCTION

Literary culture is substantive as pathway for the spread of various fields of culture in the community to be considered basis for reflection on the different themes, genres, authors, and demonstrations covering literature, basic element within the Gabriel Garcia Marquez's thought. Barranquilla has been distinguished as a literary center since the well-known Barranquilla Group existed. There is an outstanding place for literature in Barranquilla's culture.

This initiative has been complemented by managers, artists and institutions that promote the incorporation of the community as well as young students and workers of this educational institution to some literary activity. Promoting an understanding and appreciation of various forms of artistic expression, this work proposes an experience that demonstrates the extensive work to motivate toward literary culture. Spaces like this can be extended the metropolitan communities to extend the literary culture. So in this challenge of finding answers to a series of questions related to English acquisition, we were posed a complex question: What is the role of literature in the acquisition of a foreign language for those people?

It is an easily verifiable fact that literary texts are hardly considered in the foreign language classroom at

the university level, and when used, usually only been working on reading comprehension, under the pretext of teaching the communicative use of literature in English class. In this negative effect, it adds a number of factors, among which excessive dichotomy created between language and literature, many teachers feel able to teach a foreign language, but not literature.

The purpose is to practice styles, developing a critical posture, explore the processes of argument and proposal, to raise students' sensitivity and respect for others. The important thing is the understanding that the reader develops from their world view and aesthetic sense in the use of language. The student sees the process of literary reading as a process of searching for multiple senses from the internal perspective of the reader, from their most basic motivations and based on their prior knowledge and life experience.

Another enriching aspect of literary texts is that their analysis is pluri-interpretive, as can be reached through multiple paths, as each reader is a way, this fits another aspect that has to do with how student learning, its thinking or what we call learning style or cognitive mode. Every literary work proposes a kind of dialogue between the reader and the work, with its author, the characters, history, and interior monologues. Sometimes the literary piece of dialogue with other literary works has been open to multiple interpretations, worldviews and how readers approach it. As (Jauss, 1970)states: "in the horizon of expectations or reading experience".

According to (Parra, 1990). Reading is like flying, to travel unknown worlds is opening the doors to imagination and creativity. Reading is both an obligation and devotion. Its exercise is interchangeable and depends only on the will, find time to do this. But it is necessary that this will be done with pleasure. Reading is the most beautiful of diversion, the less need time and seasoning.

Literature is a subfield of sociology that studies culture. Sociology of literature studies the social production of literature and its social implications. A remarkable example is Pierre Bourdieu's. (Bourdieu, 1995) develops an original theory of art conceived as an autonomous value. He argues powerfully against those who refuse to acknowledge the interconnection between art and the structures of social relations within which it is produced and received. At Bourdieu shows, art's new autonomy is one such structure, which complicates but does not eliminate the interconnection.

The literary universe as we know it today took shape in the nineteenth century as a space set for establishing the values, customs, daily life, myths, and traditions of a given culture, or the context that the literary work took place, since then literature is one of the best sources of understanding and interpreting cultures, it is like a sociologic adventure as Roland Bartes states.(Griswold, 1993)Literature is a constant production of culture, the aesthetics part of language and makes the readers construct meanings by the power of semiotics. Recent developments takes account of studying the relationship between literature and group identities; concerning institutional and reader-response analysis; reintroducing the role of intentions of the author in literature, reconsidering the role of ethics and morality in literature<sup>i</sup> and developing a clearer understanding of how literature is and is not like other media.

The sociology of literature also recently considered one of its issues the global inequality between First-World and Third-World authors, where the latter tend to be strongly dependent on the editorial decisions of publishers in Paris, London or New York and are often excluded from participation in the global literary market. And also some issues concerning the intercultural studies as sex or gender aspects, ethical problems, discrimination, violence, drugs, are in the public eye through the literary works. Weber revolutionized the idea of a status group as a certain type of subculture. Status

groups are based on things such as: race, ethnicity, religion, region, occupation, gender, sexual preference, etc. These groups live a certain lifestyle based on different values and norms. They are a culture within a culture, hence the label subculture. Weber also had the idea that people were motivated by their material and ideal interests, which include things such as preventing one from going to hell. Weber also explains that people use symbols to express their spirituality, and symbols that are used to express the spiritual side of real events, and that ideal interests is derived from symbols. This symbolic world represents realities, identities, values and it is better comprehended through literature.

(Morrison, 1996), the most recent American receiver of the Nobel Prize for Literature, writes in a distinctive lyrical prose style. She published her controversial novel, *The Bluest Eye*, to widespread critical acclaim in 1970. Coming on the heels of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, this novel, widely studied in American schools, includes an elaborate description of incestuous rape and explores the conventions of beauty established by a historically racist society; she paints a portrait of a self-immolating black family in search of beauty in whiteness. Morrison has also experimented with lyric fantasy, as in her two best-known later works, *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Beloved* (1987), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction; She has been compared to Virginia Woolf by the critic (Bloom, 2000, page 269. )and the Nobel committee to "Faulkner and to the Latin American tradition of magical realism"<sup>ii</sup> *Beloved* was chosen in a 2006 survey conducted by the New York Times as the most important work of fiction of the last 25 years. (Nobelprize.org. , 2010 )

She writes in a lyrical, flowing style that eschews excessive use of the comma and semicolon, evoking William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. In relation to these two universal writers you can understand better the American culture and history through its literature. Much or in the same way if you reads Gabriel Garcia Marquez and José Eustasio Rivera, Jorge Isaac or any other Colombian author will reflect our culture and our history.

Literature comes to play a protagonist role in the construction of an intercultural awareness since it deals with the sociological world and uses imagery and symbols that represents a given culture that coming into contact with another creates the marvelous result of interculturality.

Interculturalism is the interaction between cultures, the exchange and the communication where the individual recognizes and accepts the reciprocity of the other's culture. The prefix 'inter' implies interaction, sharing, complementarities, recognition of the culture of the other without it could be divided between other cultures or the culture of the host country. It is also called the normative culture. In other words, interculturality can be seen as a way of being, a view of the world and other people, a kind of egalitarian relationship between human beings and peoples - it is the opposite of ethnocentrism. Interculturality is the recognition of diversity and the respect toward it.

The intercultural approach is commonly marked by three stages:

- Decentralization: it takes a more distant view of oneself; it tries to define one's frames of reference as an individual with a culture and sub-cultures blended together in one's personal development. Through this reflection on oneself, realizing what is relative about one's observations and making sense of one's reading references.
- Penetration of the other's system: it gets out of oneself to see things from the Other's perspective. It is an attitude of opening up, a personal effort of inquiry. It is like putting into someone else shoes.
- 3. Negotiation: Finding the necessary minimum compromise and understanding to avoid confrontation.

More concretely, interculturality can happen in two major ways in order to ensure the learning of the realities of one's culture and not just conceptions and discourses regarding the culture of the other:

- Intercultural learning: meeting the other in order to improve communication and encourage learning and understanding of the other's culture.
- Exchanges with the country of origin: to establish joint training between actors from the country of origin and from the host country.

#### Reading about a famous Colombian writer



Read the Passage Below in Order to Find the Following Specific Pieces of Information

Table 1

<u>Writer's name</u>	
<u>Nationality</u>	
<u>Place of birth</u>	
<u>Year he was born</u>	
<u>His most popular novel</u>	

#### Give an Appropriate Title to the Reading

- Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a Colombian writer *who* was
- Born in Aracataca in 1928. He began to work as a
- Journalist; later, he wrote short stories and finally
- Novels.
- His most popular novel is **One Hundred Years of Solitude**.
- The plot is about the Buendia family and *their* life in
- Macondo. The novel is a kind of saga *that* relates the
- folklore and the history of the Atlantic region in
- Colombia. We find Colombian characters shown in a

- universal dimension with *their* charm, contradictions and
- naivete. The Spanish language has an unusual strength,
- richness and sense of humor. Thus, **Garcia Márquez** has
- created one of the best books ever written in Spanish.
- Garcia Marquez is the most popular among *the great writers*
- of the “*Latin American boom*”: Cortazar (Argentina) Vargas
- Llosa (Peru), Carpentier (Cuba), Asturias (Guatemala) Rulfo
- (Mexico) and Borges (Argentina). *His* books have been
- translated into more than twenty languages. In spite of all
- the honors, money and fame that he has achieved he says:
- “Nothing will make me forget that / am just one of the
- Sixteen children of the telegraphist of Aracataca”.

**Table 2: Complete the following table Based on the Reading**

Line	The underlined words	Refer to
1	who	
6	their	
7	that	
10	their	
14-15	The great writers of the Latin American boom	
17	His	
20	I	

**Answer the following Questions Based on the Reading;**

- What is the theme of Garcia Marquez’s most popular novel?
  - What kind of characters do you find in the novel?
  - What characteristics does the Spanish language show throughout the novel?
  - What was the occupation of Garcia Marquez’s father?
  - How many brothers and sisters did Garcia Marquez have?
- A. List the names of other short stories or novels written by Garcia Marquez.
- B. List the names of some novels written by the other Latin American writers mentioned in this reading.

**Writing Practice**

Complete The Paragraph Below Using the Information Given in the Chart.

Table 3

Writer's name	Jorge Isaacs
Nationality	Colombian
Place of birth	Cali
Year he was born	1837
Place of death	Ibague
Year he died	1895
Novel he wrote	Maria
Novel plot	Love story between Efrain and his cousin, Maria's death before Efrain return from Europe where he went to study.
Novel setting	Farm "El Paraiso" in Valle del Cauca: Home of the Isaacs family, visited by many tourists today.
Descriptions found in the novel	Farm, its gardens, river, land, country people

\_\_\_\_\_ was a \_\_\_\_\_ writer who was born in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_ the famous romantic novel called "\_\_\_\_\_". \_\_\_\_\_ The plot is about a \_\_\_\_\_ story between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. She \_\_\_\_\_ very young before returned from \_\_\_\_\_, where he \_\_\_\_\_.

The setting of this novel is the \_\_\_\_\_ called "\_\_\_\_\_". This was the home of the \_\_\_\_\_, and today it is \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaacs \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful descriptions of the \_\_\_\_\_, its \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ he knew in his youth. He \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Unit 3



Figure 1

"In my ninetieth year, I decided to give myself the gift of a night of love with a young virgin."

An elderly journalist decides to celebrate his 90 years in a grand way, giving himself a present that will make him feel like he's still alive: a virgin. In the brothel of a picturesque town, he sees the young woman from the back, completely naked, and his life changes radically. Now that he meets her he finds himself close to dying, not of old age, but rather of love.

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores.* is the story of this eccentric, solitary old man, a narrative of his sexual

adventures (of which there were many), for which he always paid, never imagining that this would be the way he would discover true love.

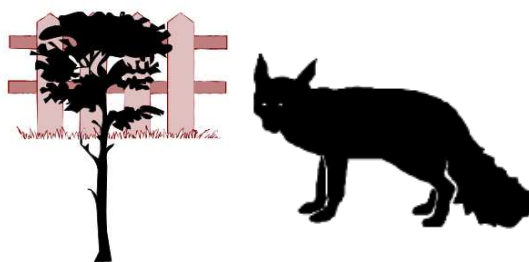
This new novel, written in Gabriel García Márquez's incomparable style movingly, contemplates the misfortunes of old age and celebrates the joys of being in love.

Development of communicative competencies

### **Interpret**

- The main character in this novel was
  - a greenish elderly man
  - an elderly journalist
  - Garcia Marquez's Grandfather
  - A journalist that likes whores
- The main character in this novel decided to give himself the gift of :
  - a night of love with a young virgin.
  - going to brothel and look for a whore
  - spending the night with a young whore
  - dying of love
- Will you pay for having sexual pleasure?
- Will you love a person who sells his or her body giving a sexual service?
- Can you think that through this way a person can find truthful love?
- Make a description of the main character

### **The Fox and the Grapes**



**Figure 2**

A hungry fox saw  
Some grapes hanging  
Over a garden wall  
“How good those grapes

look”, said the fox. “They  
make my mouth water”.

The fox jumped again  
And again trying to get  
the grapes, but she could not  
get them.

Then the fox said, “ I don’t  
Want those grapes they  
Are sour”. And she ran away.

### Comprehension Questions

- What did the hungry fox see?
  - a dozen bananas
  - some grapes
  - an apple
- Where were the grapes?
  - hanging from the ceiling
  - on the grass
  - hanging over a garden wall
- What did the fox do to get them?
  - She jumped again and again.
  - she ask for them to a gardener
  - she ask for their price
- Could she get them?
  - Yes, she could
  - No, she couldn’t
  - No, I couldn’t
- What did the fox say about the grapes?
  - “ I will go on trying one more time.”
  - “ I like those grapes they are delicious.”
  - “ I don’t want those grapes the are sour.”



- Which is the moral of this story? You can tell it in Spanish.

- Find the Topic of the Paragraph..
- *Find the Main Idea.* From the paragraph.

Animals produce a wide variety of sounds. Birds whistle porpoises click, wolves howl, and gorillas produce drum like sound as they beat their chests. The list is almost endless.

- Find the Topic of the Paragraph..
  - *Find the Main Idea.* From the paragraph.

### A Story from Aesop

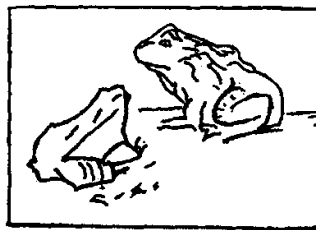


Figure 3

There is another story from Aesop which concerns two frogs. The story teaches us that we must be more modest and that we must never permit our vanity to lead us to destruction.

One day a young frog said to its father: “Oh, Father, this morning I saw a very big animal, much bigger, than you.”

“That was only Farmer White’s horse,” said the old frog. “He is not so big. I can easily make myself as big as he.”

Then the old frog started to blow himself out. “Was he as big as this?” he asked.

“Oh, much, much bigger,” said the little frog.

The old frog blew and blew. “Was he as big as this?” he asked again.

“Much, much bigger.”

“I am sure,” said the old frog finally, as he continued to blow, “that he was not so big as . . .”

But then, suddenly, the old frog burst.

- What does the story about the two frogs teach us?
  - The story teaches us that it is always best to prepare for the future.
  - that we must be more moderate and that we must never permit our vanity to lead us to destruction.
  - that we must be more modest and that we must never let our vanity to lead us to destruction.
  - that we must be more honest and that we must never permit our gossip to lead us to destruction.
- What did the last story of Aesop about the ants and the grasshopper teach us? a. that we must be more moderate and that we must never permit our vanity to lead us to destruction b.. The story teaches us that it is always best to

prepare for the future.

- that we must be more honest and that we must never permit our gossip to lead us to destruction. d.
    - that we must be more modest and that we must never let our vanity to lead us to destruction.
- What did the young frog in this story say to his father one morning?
  - I saw a very big farm house, much bigger than lighthouse
  - I saw a very big horse, much bigger than an elephant
  - I saw a very big wild animal, much bigger than a giraffe
  - I saw a very big animal much bigger than you
- How did his father answer him?
  - He is not so rich. I can be richer than him.
  - He is not so big. I can make myself as big as he.
  - He is not so big. I am as big as him
  - He is so big that I can't reach his size.
- What did the old frog start to do in order to make himself bigger?
  - He started to try to reach the ceiling.
  - b. He started to blow himself out.
  - He started to stand on tiptoe.
  - d. He started to exercise himself.
- What question did he ask?
  - a. Was he as big as me?
  - b. Was he my size?
  - c. Was he as big as this?
  - d. How tall was he?
- Did the old frog become as big as the horse?
  - Yes, he did
  - No, he didn't
  - The same height.
  - Just a little bit bigger.
- What finally happened to him?
  - he was all burned out
  - he was exhausted

- He was excited
- he burst
- Do you like such stories about animals?
- Have you read these same stories before in your own language?

### A Story from Aesop

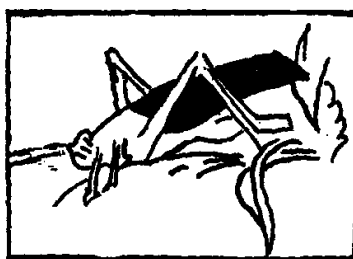


Figure 4

Among the many stories of Aesop, there is this one about a grasshopper and some ants. The story teaches us that it is always best to prepare for the future.

One autumn day, some ants were busy in a field. A grasshopper came along. “What are you doing?” said the grasshopper. “We are gathering food and preparing our home for the winter,” the ants said.

“But why are you working so hard?” said the grasshopper. “In such beautiful weather it is better to sing and to dance.”

Winter came and the weather grew very cold. Snow covered the ground. The grasshopper was cold and hungry. He met some of the ants.

“Please give me some food,” he said. “I am cold and I am hungry.”

“What did you do last summer?” the ants said. “I sang and I danced,” the grasshopper said. “Then, you can sing and dance now,” said the ants. “We have nothing for you.”

- Who was busy in a field one autumn day?
  - an ant
  - some ants
  - the grasshopper
  - a grasshopper
- Who came along?
  - some ants
  - a grasshopper
  - the grasshopper
  - an ant
- What did he say to the ants

- How are you?
  - How are you doing
  - what are you doing
  - good morning ants
- What did the ants say?
  - we are cooking some food
  - we don't want to talk to a grasshopper.
  - We are gathering food and preparing our home for the winter
  - We are dancing and drinking a lot.
- What did the grasshopper prefer to do in such beautiful weather?
  - to sing and to dance
  - to sing and to swim
  - to swim and to dance
  - to work hard
- Did the weather later grow cold or warm?
  - warm
  - hot
  - cold
  - cool
- Who became cold and hungry?
  - an ant
  - some ants
  - the grasshopper
  - a grasshopper
- What did the grasshopper want the ants to do?
  - to lend him his food
  - to lend him his home
  - to lend him his house and food
  - to give him some food because he was very hungry
- Did the ants give him any food?
  - yes, of course
  - they gave him just a little
  - they didn't have anything for him.
  - They gave him some apples and potatoes

- What lesson does this story of Aesop teach us?
  - The story teaches us that grasshoppers are not hard worker.
  - The story teaches us that ants are very hard-working animals.
  - The story teaches us that it is always best to prepare for the future
  - The story teaches us that in such beautiful weather it is better to sing and dance.

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